

LIBERTAS.

A

P O E M.

BY

The REVEREND JAMES GLASS, A. M.



B E L F A S T:

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IT may be necessary to inform the reader, that the following Poem was originally intended for recital at a festive meeting of the principal inhabitants of Derry, who assembled on the 7th of December 1788, for the purpose of commemorating the heroism displayed in the preceding century, in support of Freedom, by their illustrious ancestors.—The author, owing to some circumstances unnecessary to mention, only commenced his sketch a few days previous to their meeting, and as it has been committed to the press in its first rough dress; he was solicited by his friends to revise and publish it upon a more extended scale.—He is still conscious of its many imperfections, but since the subject was both local and recent he could not, with propriety, any longer delay the publication—As the author has been, in some measure, forced on this occasion into public view, he takes this opportunity of returning his grateful acknowledgements to those persons who have honoured him with their patronage and subscriptions to his larger work.—He hopes, from the encouragement he has already experienced from some of the most distinguished characters, to be prepared in a few months, for printing.



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LIBERTAS; QUÆ SERA TAMEN RESPEXIT.

VIRG.

UPON a rock, IERNE sad reclin'd,
And gave her locks dishevell'd to the wind;
Her cheek, which once the crimson morn display'd,
As *Cynthia's* pallid orb was wrapt in shade.
Her harp unstrung, was careless laid aside,
She only listen'd to the murm'ring tide,
Or sighing gale, that scarce was heard to blow,
But seem'd from sympathy to breathe her woe.
"Alas! she cry'd, shall ev'ry stream and flood
Still roll empurpl'd, with my children's blood?
Still shrieks of horror tranquil peace assail,
And tyranny o'er innocence prevail?"

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The few who dare despotic pow'r oppose,
 Be doom'd to tortures by their vengeful foes?"
 While thus she mourn'd, a form Divinely fair,
 Approach'd with winning smile, but martial air;
 Round on her arm appear'd an ample shield,
 Her sword beam'd light'ning over all the field:
 "Suppress thy tears, (exclaim'd the goddess bright)
 For soon thy foes shall tremble at my might;
 Or *Liberty* or *Freedom*, is my name,
 From shore to shore the bards my worth proclaim.
 A noble rank I boast, of heav'nly birth,
 Man's guardian angel was I plac'd on earth,
 Calm did I live with peace in golden times,
 But fled from racks, and chains, and tyrants' crimes;
 Yet taught e'en sov'reigns, that without my sway,
 Their crowns but shed a transitory ray;
 Foe to the coward, and the willing slave,
 I love the good, the generous, the brave.
 Ill-fated *James*, in vain with cruel hand,
 Spreads devastation o'er this hapless land:
 What! shall a Despot over Patriots reign?
 Sooner let slaughter deluge ev'ry plain,
 And future times the tragic story tell,
 That all thy heroes for their country fell.
 But louder sound the dire alarms of war,
 The drum and trumpet echo from afar,
 On DERRY will a fierce assault be made,
 I haste ye dauntless few to give you aid."

She flies to animate the Patriot band,
 Whom treach'rous friends and *Gallia's* troops with-
 stand.

Arriv'd unseen, she found the council met,
 But there the insidious friends of * *Lundy* sat,
 Who thus began :—" Compatriots, well we know,
 You never shun, but wish to meet the foe ;
 But now since *James* is master of the field,
 'Tis not inglorious, were you forc'd to yield ;
 Few are the feeble troops we now can boast,
 While countless is your monarch's warlike host ;
 And as a real patriot, *James* declares,
 He loves his subjects, even rebels spares.
 Then hear what we advise ; this message send—
 Our Royal Liege, to thee submissive bend,
 Thy faithful subjects, who shall ever own
 That only thou art worthy of the throne ;
 And now to thee our city's gates expand,
 Our lives, our fortunes, are at thy command."—
 As when aloft the waves fierce tempests throw,
 Which tranquil long had only learn'd to flow,
 They swell, they burst, they thunder on the shore,
 While rocks and caves loud bellow back the roar :
 Such is the tumult of the patriots' rage,
 Which not the SYREN flatt'ry can assuage.
 " To lose our liberties which you advise,
 Would be a meanness cowards might despise.
 Why shou'd the City's gates be open'd wide,
 Which all th' assailants boasted pow'r deride ?
 But go ; we fear despise, the gates expand—
 Yet know—here is a firm, a dauntless band,
 Who have resolv'd, who ever dares to fly,
 Tho' you command, shall deem'd a traitor die."

* Governor of the City.

" What, cried *Maimont*, * shall rebels vile withstand
 The bravest troops, and troops that I command?
 By walls protected, you defy my might,
 In words courageous, cowards in the fight;
 But if your gallant hero † dare descend,
 And here with me, in single fight contend,
 This shining blade, which ne'er was stain'd before
 With rebel blood, shall riot in his gore."
 No longer MURRAY can restrain his rage;
 " And dares MAIMONT in fight with me engage?
 Rush on my troops, rush on without delay,
 Yon colours fair, to honour point the way;
 There, bid th' encrimson'd banners bolder rise,
 Press thro' the thickest ranks, their threats despise.
 I to your flaming swords their fates consign;
 To pierce the proud MAIMONT, the task be mine!"

The cannons roar, a thousand fall in vain,
 The wrathful chiefs from vengeance to restrain,
 Thro' scenes of death each on his fiery steed,
 Impetuous flies, to conquer or to bleed.
 Refulgent meet their swords, wound follows wound,
 'Till brave MAIMONT, lies vanquish'd on the ground:
 Red from his heart the vital torrents pour,
 Distain the verdant mead and snowy flow'r.

" Tho' MURRAY justly be for courage fam'd,
 (So HAMILTON, † a warrior stern, exclaim'd,)
 Compassion must affect his gen'rous breast;
 Can he neglect a father when distress'd?

* The French General.

† Colonel Murray. ‡ General Hamilton.

Then haste ye soldiers, who around me stand,
 The father seize—this is my firm command;
 And tell him, shou'd his son my wrath despise,
 Tho' bent with years, the fire unpitied dies."
 "Unfeeling warrior! thus replied the sage,
 Tho' sad I bend beneath the load of age,
 Such manly courage still my breast inspires,
 I glow with all a youthful warrior's fires;
 That even now I meet thee as a foe,
 Fly from my sword, or dread it's vengeful blow;
 But if thou wou'd'st a hero's glory claim,
 Be brave—my son will give thee deathless fame;
 Pierc'd by his matchless sword, thy envied wound
 With sanguine honor shall adorn the ground."
 "My much lov'd father, (MURRAY spoke in tears,)
 I venerate thy wisdom and thy years,
 By heav'n protected, never canst thou bleed,
 Who wou'd attempt the base unhallow'd deed?
 Revere, O HAMILTON, these locks of snow,
 The badge of wisdom, tho' the badge of woe;
 I know thou art compassionate as brave,
 Then spare a father drooping o'er the grave."
 "My son, my son, the feeling parent cries,
 Why shou'd the crowding tears bedew thine eyes?
 To nature soon wou'd I my life resign,
 But rather let me give my life for thine."
 Scarce cou'd the foe the rising tear suppress,
 Mov'd by a father's and a son's distress.

But keener than the sword, diseases pale,
 Hunger and thirst, the patriot troops assail,
 Those HARPIES fierce, whose unrelenting rage
 Nor feels for blooming youth, nor helpless age.

E'en HOPE, the last resource of all our woes,
 Affrighted flies, nor one bright smile bestows.
 To form the night, still shades succeed to shades,
 'Till not a ray, her mantle dark pervades,
 Unless the dismal gleam that meteors shed
 To leave the night with deeper shades o'erspread,
 And shew DESPAIR array'd in sable plume,
 Who mingles with the shades of thickest gloom :
 But DERRY's heroes, even from DESPAIR,
 New courage draw and ev'ry danger dare :
 " Since partial ills promote the good of all ;
 Content we for our country's freedom fall ;
 Yet ere we fall, the crimson reeking steel
 Shall tell our ardour for the public weal."
 They spoke—Nor bursting tear, nor struggling
 sigh,
 Betray'd a wish to live, a fear to die.
 All, all was still, except the murm'ring tide,
 The tinkling rill and streamlet heard to glide ;
 Or night's foul bird, which from a lonely tow'r
 Seem'd to portend th' approach of evil hour.

But when AURORA glow'd with blushes red,
 DESPAIR to dark and dreary caverns fled,
 For still she shuns the morn with dusky flight,
 Congenial with the horrors of the night :
 While HOPE return'd, companion of the day,
 Her robe bedeck'd with IRIS' colours gay,
 And smiling said, " See, floating o'er the tide,
 BRITANNIA's lofty ships, the ocean's pride,
 Whose dreaded thunders keep the world in awe,
 And spread from pole to pole resistless law."

But why this chain, that o'er the waves impends?
 By this to stop the fleet the foe intends—
 Vain effort! to oppose a fleet so brave,
 And destin'd heroes in distress to save.
 The foremost ship defies it's boasted force,
 Bursts boldly thro', nor deviates from her course;
 But lo! she's fast aground—the raging tide
 Foams o'er the deck and roars on ev'ry side;
 "The ship is ours," exclaims th' insulting foe,
 "And streams of blood in DERRY yet shall flow!"
 Th' intrepid captain gives the dread command,
 "Quick to your guns, my gallant sailors stand."
 Wing'd by the fates, the balls destructive fly,
 'Till hundreds bleed, and hundreds lifeless lie.—
 The ship is clear, and spreading all her sails,
 To rescue DERRY, hastes with prosp'rous gales;
 The sister vessels flying in her train,
 Divide the waves and soon the harbour gain.
 Loud shouts of joy thro' all the city ring,
 And hail the ships which welcome succours bring;
 JAMES and his troops, dispirited, retire,
 His party ruin'd, all his hopes expire.

But who the flood of sorrow can restrain,
 That flows for *Browning* * number'd with the slain?
 Pale to the shore his breathless corse is borne,
 But freshest bays his fable bier adorn;
 Suffus'd in tears, the fair his grave surround,
 And strew with sweetest flow'rs the hallow'd ground:

* Captain of the Vessel that broke the Chain laid across the
 FOYLE.

But not the fair alone his fate deplore,
 E'en warriors grieve, that *Browning* is no more ;
 For still the hero, who no danger fears,
 At pity's call dissolves in tender tears—

When WILLIAM lands, he glorious conquest gains,
 Protects the good, and tyranny restrains ;
 But tho' his troops the BOYNE immortaliz'd,
 Not less the dauntless heroes shall be priz'd,
 Who first oppos'd oppression's hated reign,
 Resolv'd to bleed or freedom's cause to gain.
 Such heroes, DERRY, bright display'd thy fame,
 And INNISKILLEN, gave a deathless name.

Thrice happy country ! where such patriots rise,
 Who fir'd with LIBERTY, all fear despise,
 Unsheathe the sword, a subject's rights demand,
 And spurn e'en kings, who dare the laws withstand !
 Their bright example spreads a gen'ral flame,
 All talk of FREEDOM, all her blessings claim !
 As when some stars burst forth with boldest light,
 Dispel the threat'ning gloom of stormy night,
 Stars follow stars with emulating rays,
 'Till Heav'n itself is one unclouded blaze !—

But now the LIGHT OF PATRIOTS strikes my
 eyes,
 And bids the poet's verse sublimer rise ;
 O for a CHERUB's voice, a CHERUB's fire,
 That I to sing of BRISTOL might aspire !
 Without such aid, tho' bold be the essay,
 I will attempt the greatly daring lay ;

For danger never shall my Muse appall,
"In great attempts, 'tis glorious e'en to fall."
 With cautious wings, the timid Planets prove,
 Far from the central Sun they dare not move;
 With bolder flight, ambitious Comets soar
 To regions not e'en HERSCHAL can explore:
 And when to our horizon they return,
 'Tis not in vain with flaming heat they burn:
 For this grand purpose they their visits pay,
 'To feed with fire the Sun who dreads decay,*
 Whence all the Planets he illumines wou'd fade,
 And all be wrapt in universal shade,
 So vulgar minds, a vulgar path pursue,
 Superior talents only mark a few;
 As when of late, e'en FREEDOM fair look'd pale,
 Alarm'd, lest laws oppressive shou'd prevail;
 To BRISTOL was the noble task assign'd,
 The friend, the benefactor of mankind,
 With double fire to kindle all her soul,
 Support her rights and tyranny controul,
 On DERRY'S walls her standard high to rear,
 And teach the world that standard to revere.

Is this a dream, or form of æther light,
 Which playful fancy paints with colours bright?
 'Tis he!—Respect, respect the mighty dead,
 A crown celestial sparkles on his head.
 'Tis WALKER'S spirit,† to his country dear—
 Hail! glorious ghost! he speaks—ye Patriots hear:

* Et singulis revolutionibus accedendo ad solem, incidet is tandem in corpus solis. Newt. Princip. Math. lib. 3. Prop. xlii.

† The Revd. Mr. *Walker*, elected one of the governors on the departure of *Lundy*.

“ Illustrious Patriots, from the bright abode,
The palace of the Universal God,
I come, with you to consecrate this day,
Whose retrospective light shall still display
Your honour'd Fathers daring to oppose
The friends of Tyranny, their Country's foes,
'Till FREEDOM, dear companion of the Brave,
IERNE all her choicest blessings gave;
To know their worth, go look where tyrants
reign, *

Then freedom view with all her chearful train ;
Behold the countries once by Nature crown'd
With fruit and flow'r, now bleak and barren found :
And whence this change ?—whenever Freedom flies,
A country curs'd in desolation lies ! ———
But, bless'd by Freedom, e'en the rock assumes
A vernal robe, and gay the desert blooms.
Where now are *Latium's* pure resplendent floods,
Her blooming meads, her green embow'ring woods ?
Those beauteous scenes, which *MARCO's* Muse dis-
plays ?

Tho' lives the Muse, the prospect fair decays,
The wretched swain, by Tyranny oppress'd,
Instead of fertile fields, meets desarts waste;
While LIBERTY, e'en on the *Belgic* coast,
Snatch'd from the waves, can fertile regions boast;
From bogs and fens bid freshest verdure smile,
And golden harvests crown the reaper's toil;
Sweet blooming gardens spread on ev'ry side,
With various flow'rs of various climes the pride!

* Vide, *Wilson's* Oration delivered at the grand Federal procession in *Philadelphia*, July 1788.

Tho' on your elms no blushing grapes appear,*
 Nor drop your groves the precious balmy tear,
 Your native fields sufficient wealth can shew,
 Rich bending corn and streams that lucid flow :
 And there the swain, secure beneath the brake,
 On moss reclines, nor dreads the crested snake ;
 While ev'ry gale, or soft, or rude, that blows,
 Replete with health and vigour, life bestows !
 And now since LIBERTY protects your Isle,
 Still beauties new o'er all your landscapes smile ;
 There oft IERNE, by the Poet seen,
 Or haunts the wood, or treads the flow'ry green ;
 And free from tumults, and from wars alarms,
 Resumes her grace, and blooms with all her charms !
 As fancied Nymph, or Dryad of the grove,
 Or Naiades, who by stream or fountain rove,
 To paint her charms the past'ral Muses vie,
 And anxious look for your approving eye.
 By you protected, shall their verses prove,
 They well can sing the pangs and joys of love ;
 That not to other countries is confin'd,
 The pow'r to melt the heart and please the mind ;
 But chief the Bard who glows with FREEDOM's fire,
 And with resistless boldness sweeps the lyre,
 Tells ev'ry age in his immortal lays,
 That DERRY's heroes gain'd immortal praise,
 And you their sons, who meet this festive day,
 An equal love of LIBERTY display ;

* Ulmis adjungere vites.

Expects that by your hands—reward divine,*
 Around his brow the ivy wreath shall twine.”
 He ceas’d—then rising on the wings of light,
 A cloud of glory ravish’d him from fight.

Thus sung the Bard beneath the rural shade
 Of lowly willows, bending o’er his head—
 Ye critics, are his pencil’s colours faint?
 Do ye object, he can but feebly paint?
 What Bard, tho’ LIBERTY his breast inspire;
 With boldest Verse, cou’d paint her glorious fire?

* Doctarum hederæ præmia frontium,

Diis miscent superis.—

HOR.

F I N I S.